

**SMALLPOX VACCINE INFORMATION STATEMENT (VIS) SUPPLEMENT C****SKIN CONDITIONS THAT MEAN YOU SHOULD NOT GET
SMALLPOX VACCINE**

The smallpox vaccine is made from a live virus related to smallpox called vaccinia (not smallpox virus). The vaccine stimulates the immune system to react against the vaccinia virus, and develop immunity to it. Immunity to vaccinia also provides immunity to smallpox. For most people, live virus vaccines are safe and effective. However, people with certain skin conditions are more likely to have rare and serious reactions to the smallpox vaccine, including bad skin rashes (eczema vaccinatum). This results when virus from the vaccine site gets into broken skin and causes a rash in that area. While most people recover from this rash with treatment, it can be quite severe, sometimes leading to scarring or even death.

SKIN CONDITIONS THAT MEAN YOU SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED:

- Individuals who have ever been diagnosed with **eczema or atopic dermatitis**, (conditions involving repeated episodes of red, itchy or inflamed skin) even if the condition is mild, not presently active, or if you had it only as a child, **should not get the vaccine**.
- Individuals with **Darier's disease** should not get the vaccine.
- Individuals in **close contact** with someone who has ever been diagnosed with **eczema or atopic dermatitis**, even if the condition is mild, not presently active, or if they had it only as a child, **should not get the vaccine** because of the risk it poses to that close contact. (Close contacts include anyone living in your household and anyone you have close physical contact with such as a sexual partner.)

SKIN CONDITIONS THAT MEAN YOU SHOULD WAIT BEFORE BEING VACCINATED:

- Individuals with **breaks in their skin should not be vaccinated until the skin is fully healed**. Below are examples of skin conditions that can result in breaks in the skin.
- Individuals in **close physical contact with someone else who has breaks in their skin should not be vaccinated until the skin is fully healed**.

Examples of conditions that can result in breaks in the skin include:

- Impetigo (a skin infection)
- Varicella (chickenpox or shingles)
- Pityriasis rosea
- Acute contact dermatitis (e.g. poison oak or ivy)
- Recent significant burns (> about 1 inch x 1 inch) where skin has not completely healed
- Other conditions that cause significant rash or breaks in the skin, including moderate or extensive psoriasis, epidermolysis bullosa, severe acne (face or body) and pemphigus vulgaris.

VIS SUPPLEMENT C: Skin Conditions that Mean You Should NOT Get Smallpox Vaccine

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What are eczema and atopic dermatitis?

The word **eczema** describes certain kinds of inflamed skin. Early eczema can be red, blistering, or oozing areas of skin. Later on, eczema can be scaly, brownish, or thickened. Almost always, eczema itches. There are several different types of eczema. A special type of eczema called atopic dermatitis or atopic eczema has the greatest risk for severe rashes after smallpox vaccination.

Atopic dermatitis is a chronic disease that affects the skin. "Dermatitis" means inflammation of the skin. "Atopic" refers to a group of diseases that run in families and often occur together (including hay fever and asthma). In atopic dermatitis, the skin becomes extremely itchy and inflamed, causing redness, swelling, cracking, weeping, crusting and scaling. This often affects creases in the elbows or knees. Atopic dermatitis most often affects infants and young children, but it can continue into adulthood or appear later in life. In most cases, there are times when the disease is worse, called exacerbations or flares, followed by periods when the skin improves or clears up entirely, called remissions. Many children with atopic dermatitis will completely recover from this skin disease when they get older, although their skin often remains dry and easily irritated. Environmental factors can bring on symptoms of atopic dermatitis at any time in someone who has inherited the atopic disease trait.

Although it is difficult to know exactly how many people are affected by atopic dermatitis, an estimated 10% of infants and young children experience symptoms of the disease. Roughly 60% of these children continue to have one or more symptoms of atopic dermatitis into adulthood. This means that more than 15 million people in the United States have symptoms of the disease. None of these people should be vaccinated or be in close contact with someone who has been vaccinated because of the potential risk posed by exposure to the live virus in the smallpox vaccine.

What if there is an outbreak of smallpox?

If there is a smallpox outbreak, recommendations on who should get vaccinated will change. Anyone who is directly exposed to smallpox should get vaccinated because the disease poses greater risk than the vaccine. Public health authorities will recommend who should be vaccinated at that time.

How can I learn more?

- Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns about skin conditions.
- For more information on eczema and atopic dermatitis, visit <http://www.niams.nih.gov/hi/topics/dermatitis/> and <http://www.aad.org/pamphlets/eczema.html>

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/smallpox, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)

(Version 1)

January 16, 2003

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